

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 4-7 are all the claims pending in the application.

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for withdrawing the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, and 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as well as the rejection of claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on the Plyler reference.

To summarize, in the present final Office Action, the Examiner now rejects claims 1, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants remarks on the individual claim rejections are as follows.

I. Preliminary Matters

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note that a minor discrepancy was discovered in the clean version of claim 1, as submitted in the amendment filed on March 27, 2003. In particular, at line 10 of claim 1, the language properly should read “first *position*”, as correctly shown in the marked-up version of the claims in the March 27, 2003 Amendment. Accordingly, Applicants have incorporated the correct claim language in the present listing of the claims.

II. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Pederson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,261,115). In particular, the Examiner alleges that Pederson discloses each and every element of claim 1.

Claim 1 is amended to clarify and to define more thoroughly the features of the present invention. In particular, in the illustrative, non-limiting embodiment of the invention described

in the specification, for example, at page 9, line 11 to page 10, line 19, and in Figures 5 through 7, the engagement detector 20 is moved, together with the retainer 11, to a third position at which the engagement detector is allowed to be forcibly moved to the first position, in a case where the lock canceller 13 is manipulated when the engagement detector is placed at the second position.

In comparison, Pederson specifically discloses that the member 110 (i.e., the engagement detector) and the member 84 (i.e., the retainer) are positively prevented from being moved from their complete engagement position (i.e., the second position). See Figure 10d and col. 8, lines 25-35, of Pederson. For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that Pederson fails to disclose all of the features recited in claims 1, 4, and 5. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection and allow claims 1, 4, and 5.

III. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejects claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Pederson in view of Kouda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,120,255). The Examiner cites Kouda for the disclosure of a stopping projection 17, which the Examiner compares to the claimed stopper, as recited in the claims 6 and 7.

Applicants submit that claims 6 and 7 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 1, since Kouda does not make up for the deficiencies of Pederson, as set forth above. That is, Kouda also does not disclose or suggest at least that “the engagement detector and the retainer are moved to a third position at which the engagement detector is allowed to be forcibly moved to the first position, in a case where the lock canceller is manipulated when the engagement detector is placed at the second position”, as recited in claim

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1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection and allow claims 6 and 7.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

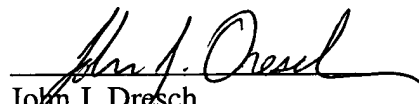
Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER


John J. Dresch
Registration No. 46,672

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